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# Islamic terrorists operate U.S. networks, officials say

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A radical Islamic infrastructure of terror — composed of safehouses in major cities, weapons, ammunition, money, and systems to provide medical and legal aid, false identity papers, and transportation — has been established across the United States.

Senior officials of the Reagan administration and classified intelligence reports draw a picture of networks designed to assist Islamic radical attempts to bomb selected targets and assassinate selected targets.

These networks, say sources, are composed of followers of Muammar Qaddafi of Libya and the Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran.

These infrastructures are operated mainly by supporters in the United States of the two radical Islamic regimes, officials say. In many cases, the Iranian and Libyan nationals are here legally as students, diplomats or in other capacities.

In other cases, some U.S. citizens who are members of radical or "separatist" movements have been enlisted as supporters or surrogates. Mercenaries with no particular ideology have, on occasion, been recruited as well.

While these U.S. officials do not presently anticipate a wave of radical Islamic-sponsored terrorism in the United States, they do not rule it out.

While there have been no major incidents of Islamic-backed terrorism in the United States to date, officials say the networks are ready to spring to action if the ayatollah or Mr. Qaddafi give the word — either directly or indirectly.

Both the Iranians and the Libyans "can activate an infrastructure in the U.S." in support of terrorism, says Oliver "Buck" Revell, assistant director of the FBI, who heads the bureau's counterterrorism program.

"We try to identify these people, gather intelligence on them, identify what they are doing," Mr. Revell told The Washington Times.

A secret, limited-distribution FBI report assessing the potential for pro-Khomeini terrorism in the United States says that the threat "does exist and should be so viewed." A copy of the report was made available to The Times.

"There have been no attacks perpetrated by fanatic Shi'ite groups against U.S. facilities or persons in the U.S. The fact that there haven't been any of these does not suggest the probability is minimal they could occur," the report concludes.

"There exists a psychological framework to commit or condone violent acts for a given cause," the report continues. "This framework exists... (but the) extent is unknown." It adds that kidnappings, robberies and other acts supporting terrorist strikes could be expected to occur.

Wayne Gilbert, deputy assistant director of the FBI, says "the major concern now is state-supported terrorism, from Iran and Libya, especially. The Islamic threat has built considerable concern, more so than it has been in previous years."

"The people in these networks are, as it were, 'sleepers,'" says another intelligence source.

"The idea is to get them in and assimilated into the country. These people will have a role to play in case they want to activate terrorist networks. Therefore their strategy is more long-term than (to engage in) immediate attacks."

While the Libyan and Iranian infrastructures are known to exist nationwide, officials admit to being uncertain as to how extensive they truly are.

Of what is known about Iranian and Libyan activities in the United States, much appears to be directed against exiles and dissidents of the respective regimes, the FBI states.

Mr. Qaddafi, in particular, has made no secret of his determination to eliminate opponents wherever they are throughout the world. Since

1980, dozens of Libyan dissidents have been killed or wounded in Western Europe and in the United States.

Last year the government in Libya said that "suicide squads" had been formed to track down and kill dissidents abroad. Their purpose was "to chase traitors, fugitives and stray dogs wherever they [are] and liquidate them physically without hesitation."

A federal grand jury was convened last week in Alexandria to investigate allegations that some pro-Qaddafi Libyans have been plotting to assassinate Libyan dissidents in the United States. Some 15 to 18 Libyans who live in Virginia, North Carolina, Michigan and Colorado were subpoenaed by the grand jury to testify.

Richard C. Shadyac, attorney for the Libyans and long a supporter of Qaddafi interests in the United States, denied any wrongdoing by his clients.

The grand jury is also said to be probing activities of the Libyan "student center" in McLean. The student center, officially called the People's Committee of Students of Libyan Aran Jamahiriya, Inc., was established in 1981 after the U.S. government ordered the Libyan embassy closed and its diplomats expelled because of Libya's "provocations and misconduct," including support for international terrorism.

The student center had been established just a month before that to provide financial and other assistance to the estimated 4,000 Libyan students that remained in the country. The modern, three-story office building that houses the student center is leased for \$159,000 a year and an estimated 40 people, mostly Libyans, are said to be presently employed there.

The Libyans also maintain a diplomatic interests section in Washington and a U.N. delegation in New York.

Some Libyan students who do not support the Qaddafi regime say their scholarships and stipends from the Libyan government have been revoked. Some students also say they have been under great pres-

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sure to return to Libya after completing their studies. Some said when they refused they were threatened by those whom they believed to be pro-Qaddafi Libyans.

Last May, two Libyans who had been admitted under student visas

were arrested after they bought three .45-caliber handguns with silencers from an FBI undercover agent. The Libyans, Bashir Baesho, 38, and Mehdi Hitewesh, 37, were also accused in court of having asked the FBI agent to supply professional hit men to "eliminate defectors."

Federal officials had said that the men were officially connected to the Libyan government and that Hitewesh was a Libyan intelligence officer assigned to duty in the United States. His attorneys say this is not so. The Libyans pleaded guilty to one count of a four-count indictment in a plea-bargaining arrangement. He was sentenced to prison for eight years and Hitewesh for seven years.

Some Libyan dissidents in the United States have been physically attacked by hooligans. In 1980, Faisal Zagallai, a graduate student at Colorado State University, was shot twice in the head by Eugene Tafoya, a former Green Beret who prosecutors charged was acting under orders from Edwin Wilson, a former CIA agent who was working for the Libyan government.

Mr. Zagallai survived the attack, but was blinded in one eye. Tafoya was convicted of assault. Wilson is serving a 52-year sentence for three convictions.

Mr. Qaddafi's activities regarding the United States go beyond hunting down dissidents to his regime.

Last June he warned, "We can assassinate and set fires inside the territory of the United States as it did to all of us." In February he urged black American servicemen to leave the military and form a separate army because the United States "must be destroyed."

In a 40-minute televised address by satellite from Libya to a convention in Chicago of the Nation of Islam, he declared to blacks: "This country must be destroyed. They refuse to accept you as American citizens. This means you are obliged to create a separate and independent state."

Louis Farrakhan, the controversial leader of the Nation of Islam (NOI), welcomed the Qaddafi declaration. "Brother Qaddafi is a man the world does not understand," Mr. Farrakhan said. The Nation of Islam

itself, whose membership is put at about 10,000, is a separatist and, its critics say, violence-prone faction of the Black Muslim movement in the United States.

In the speech, Mr. Qaddafi said, "You have the force, you have the soldiers. We are ready to give you arms because your cause is just. We are with you. Don't worry. You have to trust us. We will fight together shoulder by shoulder. The final victory will be soon."

Mr. Farrakhan said, "It would be an act of mercy to end the white man's world because your world is killing you and us and all of humanity." Later, he said he was "not trying to overthrow America" and said he declined the Qaddafi's offer of arms.

Last month Mr. Farrakhan said that he had requested and Mr. Qaddafi had granted a \$5 million "interest-free loan." The loan, he said, was to help establish a commercial enterprise to help black Americans create financial independence. "I am not a terrorist," Mr. Farrakhan said, "and don't you say I've

taken this money to make bombs."

Mr. Qaddafi's interest in NOI, according to analysts who have studied the organization, could go beyond fraternal support for a brother Islamic group.

Mr. Farrakhan over the years has called for the establishment of a separate black territory within the United States, calling the Caucasian race "white devils" and claiming that major establishments, including the organs of the media, are controlled by Jews, whom he has described as members of a "gutter religion."

In March 1984 he predicted that a race war would erupt in the United States by 1986 and that urban street gangs "are going to play a very important part in supporting and defending the black community."

He said these street gang members are "born warriors for true liberation [who are] awaiting the voice of the Messiah, and I speak, and they're hearing His voice and so they don't have no desire to fight. The voice they were born to listen to."

"And now word comes to us out of the jails, word comes to us from the streets: 'We're with you, brother.'"

In this war, Mr. Farrakhan told his followers, "We were born to settle the score. Some of the white people are going to live; maybe a few, quite a few. But [God] doesn't want them living with us. He has called us out for His glory, and He doesn't want us mixing ourselves up with the slavemasters' children whose time of doom has arrived."

According to an intelligence report, on April 14, 1983 in Benghazi, Libya, representatives from 10 U.S. organizations, including NOI, met with senior Libyan officials.

The objective, according to the report, "was to discuss Libyan volunteered support for the 'resistance front' in the U.S., including existing liberation movements in the U.S."

Another intelligence report states that the occasion for the meeting was a conference officially entitled the "First International Symposium on the Thought of Muammar Qaddafi" and held at Qar Yunis University. Some 1,000 representatives attended the eight-day conference.

This report states that the conference was merely a "cover" to work out "deals for direct Libyan aid of various types for terrorism, sabotage and other actions against the Western democracies and their allies throughout the world."

According to the first report, two NOI officials, identified as "Larry X" and "Harold X," met with Major Abd as-Salam Ahmad Jallud, the Libyan minister of defense and four other top aides at an April 13 meeting.

"The NOI proposed the Libyans use NOI banking facilities in Chicago for funding purposes, with specific effort made to finance NOI business ventures (i.e., fish distribution)," the report states, adding that the Libyans rebuffed the proposal.

The second report states the NOI representatives were "severely criticized by the Libyans for trying to extract money to finance NOI private enterprises rather than armed struggle."

Attempts to reach representatives of NOI for comment were unsuccessful.

Whatever differences the Qaddafi regime had with NOI operations, it

appears they were resolved by last month, when Mr. Farrakhan announced Mr. Qaddafi's \$5 million loan to help start up NOI's commercial operation.

Last year the FBI opened an investigation into Libya's involvement with some black nationalist groups, including NOI.

The probe grew out of FBI surveillance of Libya's mission to the U.N. in New York following reports of a possible Libyan-inspired assassination attempt against then-U.S. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick.

The investigation reportedly looked into whether Libya was abusing its diplomatic privileges by seeking to influence U.S. activities by funding certain domestic groups. Attorneys for the Libyans maintained that money had been donated to various Islamic centers for religious purposes.

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The FBI apparently has dropped the investigation and has not sought to bring charges.

Terrorism inspired by pro-Khomeini activists in the United States is something "we take seriously," William Webster, FBI director, told a Senate oversight panel in April.

He said Iranian students were being admitted to the United States last year at the rate of "between one and two thousand a month." He admitted that this was beyond the FBI's capability to monitor.

The FBI has concluded that "given the size and political diversity of the Iranian presence in the United States, there is a rather persistent threat of terrorism at the hands of Iranian Islamic zealots."

This threat, the FBI states, becomes magnified because some students "are required to return to their homeland on a periodic basis to receive 'military training.'"

The potential for Shi'ite violence in the United States has been realized on several occasions. Members of the Islamic Guerrillas of America, based in Washington, were held to be involved in the 1980 assassination of Ali Akbar Tabatabai, an out-spoken critic of the Khomeini regime.

An IGA member named David Belfield (also known as Daoud Salhudin) was indicted for the murder but he escaped to Iran via Canada and Switzerland before being apprehended. He remains a fugitive. Several other IGA members were convicted of lesser crimes in connection with the assassination.

Mr. Belfield had been converted to Shi'ite Islam while serving time at Lorton Reformatory. He had taken courses in Islam while in prison from Bahram Nahidian, a Georgetown rug merchant.

During the Iranian hostage crisis and afterwards, Mr. Nahidian was a central figure in Shi'ite efforts to seize control of the Islamic Center in Washington from other more moderate Moslem groups. Mr. Nahidian, an Iranian-born naturalized U.S. citizen, has denied involvement in criminal activities.

Unknown is how extensive the pro-Khomeini Shi'ite network is in the United States. One intelligence source says that U.S. authorities have observed weapons stockpiling "from time to time" but officials maintain no evidence of actual "training camps," either Iranian or Libyan, has been uncovered.

"Violence has been mostly internal, and within the Iranian community," the intelligence source says.

"These terrorist cells in the U.S. are small and relatively disciplined and therefore one can't say when they might go into action. When they think they should act, they will.

"But it hasn't been worth Khomeini's while to initiate actions in the U.S. which may result in B-52s over Tehran," the source adds.

The FBI's Buck Revell estimates the core number of Iranian militants in the United States at 200 to 300. He says a crackdown on so-called "student" influx from Iran should be done.

"Unfortunately the immigration laws are so complex and convoluted (that the so-called 'student') may take years to get expelled," Mr. Revell says. "The law is archaic and the Immigration and Naturalization Service ability is impacted by the influx of illegal aliens."

Regarding Islamic-backed terrorism in the United States, he says: "Nobody can guarantee that nothing is going to happen. If they say so, they're a damn liar. We are doing all we can."